



A SPACE TO CREATE

Discovering MSU's Broad Art Lab
BY EAN MONTAGUE AND JORDAN SICKON



The MSU Broad Art Museum is one of the least missable buildings on MSU's campus. With its shiny, pointy, futuristic architecture, it's a sight to see when driving through downtown East Lansing.

Now, there's a new addition to the museum, dubbed the MSU Broad Art Lab, that's located just across the street. Launched in May of 2018, the Art Lab offers a new space for the museum, campus and surrounding community to interact and enjoy art.

For starters, the Art Lab is a space designated to showcase more of the Broad's massive art collection that the public may not know about or often interact with. The exhibits on display rotate around different themes periodically, so you can keep an eye out for something that piques your interest. It also gives high school students, MSU museum studies students and MSU art history students a place to curate, research and learn about pieces in the museum's collection.

The experimental space features more than a gallery. The Broad Art Lab is all about experimentation and innovation. Thursday workshops are available, called Studio Process, that allow MSU students and community members to experiment with art in ways they might not be able to otherwise. More in-depth workshops are offered monthly and, as opposed to the Studio Process sessions, must be reserved in advance and are updated on the museum's website, broadmuseum.msu.edu/artlab, and social media pages.

"I dig it. I'm excited to see what other kind of stuff they do," Senior Ash Boss said about the Art Lab. Boss recently attended a screen-printing workshop at the Lab. "I think I need more of a kick in the butt to be creative sometimes, and hopefully they'll do some stuff that'll jumpstart that," she said.

The team at the Broad plans to do exactly that. The Art Lab is open to the public from noon to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. If you have any ideas of what you would like to do at the lab, the space is open to new concepts. Anything hands-on, experimental and inclusive, whether it be drawing, knitting or performance-based, can be proposed for the studio.

We were lucky enough to sit down with the MSU Broad's Director of Education Michelle Word to find out a little more about the Broad Art Lab and why it's the next hot spot for MSU students and faculty.

Ing: What did you originally have in mind for the space?

Michelle: The idea was to have a space that would display the collection that the museum owns to the public ...

We knew that it would have a gallery and would be showing the artwork, then we had to figure out what type of programming we could do in this space. We thought about things that would be really engaging and interactive for people, things that could be hands-on and experiential.

So, we decided that the inclusion of the studio space would be a great opportunity for people to come in, get comfortable with art by making it themselves and be able to make connections with the galleries.

Ing: It's incredible that it came to be so quickly. What do you see the Art Lab becoming?

Michelle: I think the biggest idea that we're still working on ... is "how can we be more reflective of our community?" We hope to use this space as an experimental arm of the museum where we can think of ways to bring students, faculty and community members from the greater Lansing area into the Lab and invite them to help shape what it is.

Ing: Now that school is back in session, are you shifting your vision and programming to involve students more?

Michelle: We do really hope that students take advantage of the Process studio. We started last year collaborating with the Union Activities Board (UAB) to host some of their craft nights and that went really well. It helped us understand even more that, if given the opportunity, students love to come out and try hands-on activities. We will be working with them again this year, but we see the open studios as just another opportunity for students to interact ... We'd like to see a lot of students visit! We also will be doing our "New in Student Performance" series here in the space. This program is an application call for any creative Spartans who would like to share what they're doing ... it might be a performance, music, dance, poetry or something we haven't quite thought of.

Ing: To go along with student and community engagement, are there any opportunities to make suggestions for the Art Lab?

Michelle: We have an "open call" philosophy for this space. Like I said earlier, we hope to invite the community in and really create programming that is relevant to the community. The best way we can do that is to invite people to be co-creators and co-conspirators of what we do, to collaborate with us. Instead of us deciding "Hm ... I think a student might like that!" to have a student say "You know, I've always wanted to do this ..." In October, we'll be opening an online application that is an open call to allow students, faculty, community members and others to submit ideas for things they would like to do in the space.



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